



Background – what is mate crime?

People with learning disabilities, autism, mental ill health and older people are particularly vulnerable to 'mate crime': abuse by those they regard as friends. While they might consider reporting abuse by a stranger, they may be reluctant to report abusive behaviour from someone whose friendship they do not want to lose



Hate crime

Some mate crimes can be classified as 'disability hate crimes', which the Crown Prosecution Service describes as 'a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity'. Any criminal offence can be a disability hate crime, and when classed as such, the judge can impose a tougher sentence under s.146 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003



Exploitative relationships

Mate crime involves complex issues. The abuser is likely to be seen as a close friend, carer or family member. They will exploit this relationship, and the victims, who may be unaware of hidden motives and have less ability to develop and maintain friendships, can end up accepting these unequal relationships



Examples of mate crime

- 'Mates' only turning up on benefits 'payday'
- Being physically beaten for the amusement of 'mates'
- Made to feel worthless and insulted for others entertainment
- Persuaded to perform sexual acts, including on others
- 'Allowing' their homes to be used by others, often for criminal purposes

Indicators of mate crime

- Changes in routine, behaviour, appearance & finances
- Doing what they are told to by a 'friend'
- New 'friends' not respecting the person
- Parties and drug use
- Unexplained injuries
- Disengagement from other social networks
- Unexpectedly short of money, unable to pay bills and / or possessions missing

Spotting and reporting

Mate crime can be hard to recognise and often requires a multi-agency response. Victims are unlikely to come forward due to not recognising the abuse as a crime, a fear of not being believed, or of repercussions, or a reluctance to report a perceived friend or family member

What to do

Have information? Contact Nottinghamshire Police on **101** or **999** in an emergency

If you are concerned about an adult at risk, contact the MASH on **0300 500 80 90**, or [Report abuse or neglect of an adult | Nottinghamshire County](#)

[NSAB Procedures](#)

[NSAB Resources](#)

